

**United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust.
Occupational Health & Wellbeing Service.
Mindfulness for Wellbeing Courses – Overview.**



Mindfulness

Mindfulness Programme Courses:

1. **Mindfulness Lite course 3.5 hours**
2. **Mindfulness for Wellbeing, six-week, two-hour per session**
3. **Introduction to Mindful Teams. five-week, two-hour session**

Introduction

What is Mindfulness and what does it do?

Mindfulness enables us to use our thoughts, senses and body to fully experience what is happening to us and around us, at the moment events occur. The tools and techniques of Mindfulness do not shut off emotions, dumb down feelings or leave an empty mind, but offer opportunity for us to respond to events and issues rather than reacting in an automatic or habitual way.

Mindfulness is a practice not a knowledge enhancing exercise. The practice and techniques help to focus the mind, body and heart by developing a new relationship with the conditions that arise for us. As we become familiar with the techniques we begin to respond creatively, are less overwhelmed by experiences and able to stay on a steadier course whatever life offers us. However, Mindfulness is not a detached clinical approach to 'managing' stress, it helps us to use the higher human qualities of kindness, compassion and emotional warmth to fully engage with our lives.

Mindfulness helps us to be more aware of what we are feeling and how we are interacting with others and ourselves. In this way Mindfulness can be beneficial in all aspects of life, at home, at work and in wider society¹.

The benefits – personal and societal

The benefits of Mindfulness are already well researched with over 500 peer-reviewed scientific journals published worldwide every year², but there is still much to do in this area of exploration especially around public interest and experience. The All Party Parliamentary Group (MAPPG)³ launched an enquiry (2014) to consider the potential relevance of Mindfulness to urgent national policy challenges. After a year of research and enquiry reporting through the 'Mindfulness Initiative Secretariat', and after eight hearings in parliament, the report 'Our Mindful Nation UK' was published in October 2015⁴.

The report highlights the benefits of Mindfulness in a number of areas with the aim to address national population challenges, boost productivity and creativity in the economy, enhance local communities and release the wider potential of society. Some of the areas considered included ways to improve the mental wellbeing of the populace (mental ill-health affects 1:3 families in the UK, with up to 10% of the adult population experiencing symptoms of depression in any given week. Yet of those living with mental ill-health only 1:3 are receiving any treatment (*OMNUK 2015*) and help those with long-term conditions (specifically those living with

obesity and diabetes) to live well and continue to play an active part in the work place and wider society.

The report concluded that no single Mindfulness therapy works for everyone and there needed to be a wide range of Mindfulness-based interventions (*MBI*) made available including (but not only) Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (*MBCT*) which has been recommended for the treatment of depression by the National Institute for health and Clinical Excellence (*NICE*) since 2004⁵.

As Mindfulness is an experience rather than an academic study, a programme of Mindfulness courses was established in Westminster and attended by 115 parliamentarians and 80 of their staff, to allow them first-hand experience of how it works at an individual level (*OMNUK 2015*). Changes in government mean changes in priority and policy but Mindfulness has been established worldwide for many centuries and continues to go from strength to strength in the 21st.

Mindfulness in the workplace

Many private companies and public organisations, such as the NHS and the Police are beginning to invest in Mindfulness programmes for their staff in order to improve productivity and creativity and to develop resilience in their key workforce. Higher levels of wellbeing in the workforce have been shown. Studies suggest that some of the benefits of Mindfulness programmes in the workplace include improved insight, problem solving, cognitive flexibility, reduction in perceived stress and distress coupled with enhanced feelings of wellbeing, all of which can be associated with a healthy workforce. MAPPG charged the Department for Business Innovation (BIS) with demonstrating leadership in developing Mindfulness with employers and a number of studies were commissioned through the 'What Works Centre for Wellbeing'⁶. NICE supports the use of Mindfulness as an occupational health intervention and has called for more research into specific areas of challenge, such as stress, work-related rumination, fatigue and disturbed sleep.

Examples of companies and organisations that have developed Mindfulness programmes include: nPower; Tata steel; Surrey and Sussex Police; National Offender Management Service Wales (NOMSW); Manchester University; United Lincolnshire Hospital Trust; Central Government Departments such as those working with Education and the Criminal Justice System. Mindfulness has started in schools with teachers training to offer Mindfulness-based techniques to their pupils and colleagues.

The MAPPG was clear that Mindfulness as not a 'quick fix' nor could it be effective for staff unless basic standards of working life such as hours of work, worker control of activity and worker involvement in decision making were also addressed. Mindfulness can offer real benefits for reducing stress and related absenteeism but can only achieve its full potential as part of a well-designed organisational culture that takes investment in employee wellbeing seriously.

Mindfulness Programme

Mindfulness Lite course 3.5 hours

The 3.5-hour 'Mindfulness Lite' session for employees is a taster or basic introduction to Mindfulness suitable for staff at all levels from all specialities. This course contains the core messages and concepts of Mindfulness along with opportunity to try out two of the foundation practices and share some fun 'myth-busters'. There are handouts to support the key messages of the session.

No previous experience of Mindfulness necessary, but it is unlikely to be beneficial to those with an established Mindfulness practice.

Workshop Outline

Aims: By the end of the session participants will:

- Gain some understanding of Mindfulness core concepts and how it can be applied to personal wellbeing
- Experience some basic core practices which can be tried outside of the session
- Gain some understanding of the benefits and limitations of mindfulness as a method for supporting personal and professional wellbeing
- Bust some myths about Mindfulness
- Gain some insight into why Mindfulness is offered to our staff as part of the Emotional Wellbeing offer developed within the Occupational Health Department
- Have some fun and something different to think about

Content

- **Mindfulness Context**
- **What is Mindfulness?**
- **Mindfulness Tools and techniques**
- **Core Concepts including – Mindfulness and the Mind, thoughts, the body, working with the breath, sense awareness.**
- **Primary and secondary suffering**
- **Habit Releasing**
- **The pleasure of slowing down**
- **Responding not reacting**
- **Self - Compassion, knowledge and practice**
- **Mindfulness Practice formal and applied including getting the most out of the practices**
- **Myth-busting**
- **Benefits**
- **Practices included – Body Scan, Breath Anchor**



Learning Format

Group learning through formal presentation, experience learning using two core practices, small and large group – work, post-workshop reflective and applied practice.

Mindfulness for Wellbeing, six-week, two-hour per session course

This six-week, two-hour per session course offers attendees opportunity to improve their personal wellbeing through introduction to and experience of the tools and techniques of Mindfulness. The core practices are introduced and developed within the group setting, alongside formal teaching on the core concepts and techniques. The small closed group format allows attendees to try the guided practices, develop their understanding of the core concepts and share their challenges and benefit with others in a safe setting. Attendees are expected to undertake self-directed work with the tools and techniques outside of the group which helps support sustained practice over time and continual personal development. The course teaches formal practices but also ‘applied practice’ which allows individuals to actively utilise what they have learnt and developed to their daily lives at home, at work and in their relationships with others.

There is information and handouts to support the main messages of the course and MP3 recordings to support the guided practices.

Course Outline

Aims: By the end of the course participants will:

- Understand the core concepts of Mindfulness and how these can be applied to personal wellbeing, effective relationship building at home and in the work environment
- Experience the basic core Mindfulness Practices with sufficient confidence to continue to develop these outside of the formal sessions
- Apply Mindfulness Practice to daily life and experience the benefits of utilising these techniques at a personal level
- Gain some understanding of the benefits and limitations of mindfulness as a method for supporting personal and professional wellbeing and developing personal resilience in times of challenge
- Begin to develop an understanding of the value of self-compassion and the relationship with self and others
- Experience Mindful Movement and Mindful Eating as methods of awareness
- Understand the relationship between stress, resistance and habit
- Understand better their relationship with and to their thoughts and how to address primary and secondary suffering
- Understand the concepts and practices relating to Mind, Body, and Emotion as applied to Mindfulness Practice
- Understand the concepts and practices relating to our relationship with the breath as applied to Mindfulness Practice
- Feel confident to continue some aspects of what they have learnt and experienced during the course and to develop a personalised sustainable Mindfulness Practice.

NB: This is an introductory course. Participants should become familiar with the essence of Mindfulness and how it can benefit them. They will not be expected to master the techniques or fully understand the concepts within the six-week period.

Content

- **Mindfulness context**
- **What is Mindfulness?**
- **Benefits**
- **Mindfulness tools and techniques**
- **Mindfulness and the mind, body and heart**
- **Working with the breath**
- **Mindful movement**
- **Being and Doing**
- **Resistance and challenge**
- **Aversion and Acceptance**
- **Response not reaction**
- **Working with our sense awareness**
- **Primary and secondary suffering**
- **Habit Releasing**
- **The three major emotion systems**
- **The pleasure of slowing down**
- **Self-compassion: the basis for kindness and compassionate living knowledge and practice**
- **Mindfulness Practice formal and applied including getting the most out of the practices**
- **Myth-busting**
- **Practices included – Body Scan, Breath Anchor, Giving and Receiving Kindness, Open Heart Practice, 30-second Practice, Mindful Movement.**



Learning Format

Closed group format to encourage engagement, participation and peer-led support. **Teaching** through formal presentation, discussion and literature. **Experiential learning** of the Mindfulness practices such as: Body Scan, Mindful eating, Mindful Movement. **Small and large group – work** to explore core concepts and practices. **Self-directed learning** (outside of the formal sessions) including reflective learning, formal and applied practice. **Use of Media** such as MP3 downloads and use of online links to encourage sustained practice and **continued self-development.**

Introduction to Mindful Teams. five-week, two-hour session course

This five-week, two-hour session course applies the core concepts and practices of Mindfulness to support effective and efficient team working. Attendees will gain

most benefit from this course if they have some experience/knowledge of Mindfulness, but this is not a prerequisite. Teams or key members of a team should attend together to support application directly to the work environment. The core principles, concepts and practices of Mindfulness are consistent in the course outline, however these are applied to both the business of the organisation or department and the team dynamic to ensure that application to the workplace is appropriate and meaningful. There is an Action-Learning component to this course in that there is a break after the fourth session to support application to the work setting, with the final session focusing on reflection, challenges/benefits, lessons learnt and 'what next'?

Handouts and literature is supplied as appropriate.

Course Outline

Aims: By the end of the course participants will:

- Understand the core concepts of Mindfulness and how these can be applied to personal wellbeing, effective relationship building in a team and in the wider work environment
- Experience the basic core Mindfulness Practices with sufficient confidence to continue to develop these outside of the formal sessions
- Apply Mindfulness Practice to daily life and experience the benefits of utilising these techniques at a personal level
- Gain some understanding of the benefits and limitations of mindfulness as a method for supporting personal and professional wellbeing and developing personal resilience in times of challenge
- Begin to develop an understanding of the value of self-compassion and the relationship with self and others
- Experience Mindful Movement and Mindful Eating as methods of awareness
- Understand the relationship between stress, resistance and habit
- Understand better their relationship with and to their thoughts and how to address primary and secondary suffering
- Understand the concepts and practices relating to Mind, Body, and Emotion as applied to Mindfulness Practice
- Understand the concepts and practices relating to our relationship with the breath as applied to Mindfulness Practice
- Feel confident to continue some aspects of what they have learnt and experienced during the course and to develop a personalised sustainable [Mindfulness Practice](#).

Content

- **Mindfulness context of being and working with others**
- **What is Mindfulness?**
- **Team dynamics**
- **Function and dysfunction**
- **Mindfulness tools and techniques**
- **Core Concepts including – Mindfulness and the mind, the body, the heart, sense awareness**



- **Shared experience in teams**
- **Working with thoughts**
- **Primary and secondary suffering**
- **Working with the breath**
- **The three major emotion systems**
- **Being and Doing**
- **Resistance and challenge**
- **Aversion and Acceptance**
- **Habit Releasing**
- **The pleasure and effectiveness of slowing down**
- **Responding not reacting to challenge personally and together**
- **Self-compassion as a basis for compassion for others**
- **Mindfulness Practice formal and applied including getting the most out of the practices for effective working**
- **Benefits to the self and to others**
- **Practices included – Body Scan, Breath Anchor, applied short practices**

Learning Format

Closed work group format to encourage engagement, participation and peer led support and application of tool and techniques to the workplace. **Teaching** through formal presentation, discussion and literature. Guided **experiential learning** of Mindfulness practices (in group and self-directed) to build personal and team resilience. **Small and large group – work**, to explore concepts and practices in the session and applied to the workplace. **Self directed learning** (outside of the formal sessions) including reflective learning, formal and applied practice. **Use of Media** such as Mp3 downloads and use of online links to encourage sustained practice and **continued self-development. Action Learning** through the development of a 'team plan' focusing on the learnt Mindfulness core concepts and applying these to team dynamics, interpersonal relationships and systems in the work environment, with a final formal group feedback session.

Bibliographies/Works Cited

1. Burch, V & Penman, D (2013). Mindfulness for Health
2. The Mindful Initiative (2014). www.themindfulinitiative.org.uk
3. The Mindfulness All Parliamentary Group (2013). Westminster, London, UK
4. MAPPG (2015). Our Mindful Nation UK. Gov Press UK
5. NICE (2004/2009). Guideline CG91, Depression I adults with a chronic physical health problem: treatment and management
6. 'What Works Centre for Wellbeing' (2015). <http://whatworkswellbeing.org>
7. NICE Guidelines (2009) PH22, Promoting Wellbeing at work. Manchester
8. Ostain BD, Kassman KT. (2012). Stepping out of history. Mindfulness improves insight problem-solving. Consciousness and Cognition: 21:1031-1036

9. Moore A, Malinowski P(2009). Meditation, mindfulness and cognitive flexibility. *Consciousness and Cognition*:18 176-86

10. MAPPG (2014) Parliamentary Hearing Nov 25th 2014: Presentations of Evidence. Westminster London UK.

Yve White-Smith.
Specialist Practitioner Mental Health



Mindfulness